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Social development: United Nations Literacy Decade: education for all

Armenia, Bulgaria, Colombia, Guatemala, Mongolia and Nicaragua: draft resolution

United Nations Literacy Decade: education for all

The General Assembly,

Recalling its resolution 56/116 of 19 December 2001, by which it proclaimed the ten-year period beginning on 1 January 2003 the United Nations Literacy Decade, its resolution 57/166 of 18 December 2002, in which it welcomed the International Plan of Action for the United Nations Literacy Decade, its resolution 59/149 of 20 December 2004 and its resolution 61/140 of 19 December 2006,

Recalling also the United Nations Millennium Declaration,[1] in which Member States resolved to ensure that, by 2015, children everywhere, boys and girls alike, will be able to complete a full course of primary schooling and that girls and boys will have equal access to all levels of education, which requires a renewed commitment to promote literacy for all,

Reaffirming the emphasis placed by the 2005 World Summit on the critical role of both formal and non-formal education in the achievement of poverty eradication and other development goals as envisaged in the Millennium Declaration, in particular basic education and training for achieving universal literacy, and the need to strive for expanded secondary and higher education as well as vocational education and technical training, especially for girls and women, the creation of human resources and infrastructure capabilities and the empowerment of those living in poverty,

Reaffirming also that quality basic education is crucial to nation-building, that literacy for all is at the heart of basic education for all and that creating literate environments and societies is essential for achieving the goals of eradicating

[1] See resolution 55/2.

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poverty, reducing child mortality, curbing population growth, achieving gender equality and ensuring sustainable development, peace and democracy,

Convinced that literacy is crucial to the acquisition by every child, youth and adult of the essential life skills that will enable them to address the challenges that they can face in life and represents an essential condition of lifelong learning, which is an indispensable means for effective participation in the knowledge societies and economies of the twenty-first century,

Affirming that the realization of the right to education, especially for girls, contributes to the promotion of gender equality and the eradication of poverty,

Welcoming the considerable efforts that have been made so far by Member States and the international community to address the objectives of the Decade and to implement the International Plan of Action,

Reaffirming the right of indigenous peoples, in particular children, to have non-discriminatory access to all levels and forms of education provided by States,

Noting with deep concern that 774 million adults who do not have basic literacy skills and 75 million children remain out of school, and millions more young people leave school without a level of literacy adequate for productive and active participation in their societies, that the issue of literacy may not be sufficiently high on national agendas to generate the kind of political and economic support required to address global literacy challenges and that the world is unlikely to meet those challenges if the present trends continue,

Deeply concerned about the persistence of the gender gap in education, which is reflected by the fact that nearly two thirds of the world's adult illiterates are women,

1. *Takes note* of the report of the Director-General of the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization on the implementation of the International Plan of Action for the United Nations Literacy Decade;[2]

2. *Takes note also* of the summary outcomes of the Regional Conferences in Support of Global Literacy,[3] held in Azerbaijan, China, India, Mali, Mexico and Qatar in 2007 and 2008, which indicate that the second half of the United Nations Literacy Decade should develop appropriate networks for greater regional collaboration;

3. *Recognizes* that a renewed collective commitment will be needed if the objectives of the Decade are to be met;

4. *Calls* on Member States to further reinforce political will, giving literacy higher priority within their educational planning and budgeting;

5. *Appeals* to all Governments to develop reliable literacy data and information and more inclusive policymaking environments, and to devise innovative strategies for reaching the poorest and most marginalized groups and for seeking alternative formal and non-formal approaches to learning with a view to achieving the goals of the Decade;

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[2] Available from http://www.unesco.org/education/en/literacy/conferences.

[3] Available from http://www.unesco.org/education/en/literacy/conferences.

6. *Also appeals* to Governments to take full account of the use of languages in different contexts by promoting multilingual approaches to literacy, through which learners may acquire initial literacy in the language they know best and in additional languages as needed;

7. *Urges* all Governments to take the lead in coordinating the activities of the Decade at the national level, bringing all relevant national actors together in a sustained dialogue and collaborative action on policy formulation, implementation and evaluation of literacy efforts;

8. *Appeals* to all Governments to strengthen national and subnational professional institutions in their countries and to foster greater collaboration among all literacy partners with a view to developing greater capacity to design and deliver high-quality literacy programmes for youth and adults;

9. *Appeals* to all Governments and to economic and financial organizations and institutions, both national and international, to lend greater financial and material support to the efforts to increase literacy and achieve the goals of Education for All and those of the Decade;

10. *Takes note* of the three priority areas for the remaining years of the Decade identified through the mid-Decade review, namely, mobilizing stronger commitment to literacy, reinforcing more effective literacy programme delivery and harnessing new resources for literacy, and requests the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization to develop a strategic framework for renewed cooperation and action based on these priorities, in cooperation with international partners in literacy, including the other specialized agencies and organizations of the United Nations system;

11. *Requests* the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization to reinforce its coordinating and catalysing role in the fight against illiteracy and to develop, in cooperation with other international partners, in particular the specialized agencies and organizations of the United Nations system, and on the basis of the mid-Decade review and the outcomes of the Regional Conferences in Support of Global Literacy held in 2007 and 2008, a strategic framework for renewed cooperation and action in literacy;

12. *Invites* Member States, the specialized agencies and other organizations of the United Nations system, as well as relevant intergovernmental and non-governmental organizations, to support the implementation of the above priorities within the framework of the internationally agreed development goals, including those contained in the United Nations Millennium Declaration;[1]

13. *Calls upon* Member States to give literacy higher priority within their educational planning and budgeting, while strengthening national and subnational institutions and fostering greater collaboration among all literacy partners;

14. *Also calls upon* Member States to give, during the second half of the implementation of the International Plan of Action for the United Nations Literacy Decade, adequate attention to the cultural diversity of minorities and indigenous peoples;

15. *Requests* all relevant entities of the United Nations system, in particular the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization, in cooperation with national Governments, to take immediate, concrete steps to address the needs

of countries with high illiteracy rates and/or with large populations of illiterate adults, with particular regard to women, including through programmes that promote low-cost and effective literacy provisions;

16. *Requests* the Secretary-General, in cooperation with the Director-General of the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization, to seek the views of Member States on the progress achieved in implementing their national programmes and plans of action for the Decade and to submit the next progress report on the implementation of the International Plan of Action to the General Assembly in 2010;

17. *Decides* to include in the provisional agenda of its sixty-fifth session, under the item entitled "Social development", the sub-item entitled "United Nations Literacy Decade: education for all".